

It was for services such as these that many of the English Bishops had risen to the bench, by the nomination of the King, but with the consent of the Pope. In a few cases, however, the Supreme Pontiff still ventured to assert his authority by nominating his own friends. He never thrust foreigners into the bishoprics ; there were many Englishmen at Avignon high in his favour whom their country could accept, but whom he could still trust to remember their patron. Archbishop Sudbury himself, the son of a poor Suffolk gentleman, had been sent abroad as a boy to work his way up the Church. Employed first as a household chaplain for Innocent the Sixth, he had become one of the Auditors of the Council, at Avignon. His great patron had then sent him back to England as Chancellor of Salisbury diocese. In 1361 he had been made an English Bishop; in 1375 Gregory the Thirteenth raised him to the Primacy.<sup>1</sup> If the Pope had always used his patronage so harmlessly as in this case, his interference would have been less disliked. But his appointments were sometimes more open to criticism. In 1370 the rich bishopric of Norwich became vacant. At the request of a soldier of fortune in his Italian army, he gave the see to the captain's brother, Henry Spencer, who had himself served in the wars of Italy. The new Bishop was consecrated on the spot and sent back to England to take charge of the diocese.<sup>2</sup> It seems as if Spencer would have had a fairer field for his talents if he had confined himself to the profession of arms. In the Peasants' Rising of 1381 his brief and effective campaign in the Eastern Counties broke the back of the rebellion ; two years later he headed the English armies in Flanders. He always remained a strong partisan of the Papacy, as his patron had no doubt expected when he gave him the bishopric. But even Papal nominees, like Sudbury and Spencer, soon became connected with English politics and held office under the English Crown.

The close connection between the bench of Bishops and the royal ministry was not a new corruption that had lately crept into the Church. It was a tradition from the days of the

<sup>1</sup> *M8. Calendar of Lambeth Register*, first pages of vol. Sudbury, 1375--81.

<sup>2</sup> *Godwin's Catalogue; Hist. Ang. Ecc.*, 546 ; *Froiss.*, ii. cap. 194.